GENERAL ELECTIONS

4. My Government have made satisfactory progress in regard to the holding of elections under the new Constitution. Proposals have been formulated for the delimitation of constituencies for the House of the People and for the Legislative Assembly and they are now under the scrutiny of the Parliamentary Sub-Committee. The enumeration of voters has been completed while the printing and publishing of preliminary electoral rolls on the basis of adult franchise is expected to be completed in a month. There is a full-time officer with jurisdiction over the entire State as Chief Electoral Officer for supervision, guidance and control of the elections, and we hope to be ready to conduct the elections in time.

FOOD POSITION

5. As you are all aware, the prevailing shortage of food stuffs in the country continues to be the most pressing problem of the day. In our own State, it assumed a serious aspect in August last, when the stocks ran short and became insufficient even to meet the monthly requirements. My Government took steps to meet the crisis by tightening up procurement, obtaining paddy from rich landlords on a loan basis and by unearthing hoarded stocks. They are fully alive to the hardship which a deterioration in the stock position will cause to the general public and are taking all possible steps to prevent the recurrence of such a short crisis in the future. They have now appointed in each taluk in the Travancore area a separate full-time Tahsildar with the necessary staff to attend exclusively to procurement and distribution. They have also decided to establish Government depots in the place of private wholesalers in foodgrains and have already made a beginning in some of the centres in the State.

Controls and rationing are irksome and are at best only temporary expedients for meeting the prevailing shortage. My Government are, therefore, forging ahead with their programme of food production. Work has progressed satisfactorily on the Peechi Irrigation project, the Chalakudi project and the Perinchani scheme. Investigation has been completed in respect of the Bhoothathan project and Vadakkancheri river valley project, while the investigation of the Neyyar project and the Vembanad lake project has been taken up. Besides, my Government have taken up vigorously the programme of providing lift irrigation facilities and have sanctioned as many as 17 schemes at a cost of Rs. 15·00 lakhs for execution in 1950-51. They are arranging for the speedy execution of a number of works such as tanks, wells and canals and have taken up a scheme for the multiplication of improved seeds. They have programmed to bring under cultivation new lands in the current year.

AGRICULTURE

6. With a view to bringing about an immediate increase in the production of paddy, a scheme for intensive cultivation has been taken up. An area of 2,70,000 acres has been selected in South Travancore, Onattukara, Kuttanad, Alwaye and Trichur for intensive manuring. This measure together with the use of improved seeds and the adoption of effective methods for plant protection is expected to step up the production of paddy. Besides, an intensive drive for compost production by converting all waste into valuable manure has been undertaken, and over a thousand teachers have been given training to do propaganda work in the villages for compost production.

BACKWARD COMMUNITIES

7. My Government are continuing to devote special attention for the amelioration of the backward communities. They are assigning lands to them on an

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly

extensive scale and have embarked on a scheme costing over rupees one and a half lakhs for the construction of about 800 houses in the current year for their occupation. Steps are being taken to organise on a co-operative basis the cottage industries on which the families of these communities are generally engaged. My Government are giving free education to the students of backward communities and have adopted a liberal policy in the matter of granting other educational concessions to them. It has been decided to appoint suitable candidates from these communities to higher posts to secure adequate representation in the higher ranks of the Govarnment service and to exclude them from retrenchment measures.

MEDICAL AND PUBLIC HEALTH

8. My Government are fully alive to the necessity for the protection of the health of the people, for the prevention of the occurrence of epidemics, and for the provision of medical relief by encouraging both modern and indigenous systems. They have arranged for the provision of midwifery service on a much larger scale, and have revived the scheme for free distribution of milk. They propose to start a first class T. B. clinic at Trivandrum with the assistance of the World Health Organisation and the Government of India and will open shortly the T. B. Sanatorium at Mulakunnathukavu and the T. B. Clinic at Palluruthy. They have appointed a Committee for the formulation of a scheme for the establishment of dispensaries in the State and have sanctioned the formation of Boards of Honorary Visitors to Hospital in certain important places in order to give an opportunity to the public to come in contact with the administration of medical institutions and to make suggestions for their improvement. The University of Travancore-Cochin has instituted a Faculty of Ayurveda.

HOUSING OF THE POOR

9. Realising the importance of the problem of housing for the poor, my Government are anxious to provide houses particularly for the rural agricultural labourers, fishermen in coastal areas, municipal menials and industrial labourers. They have constituted a Housing Board to deal with the problem on a systematic basis. The responsibility for working out the scheme will be entrusted to Co-operative Societies, wherever possible, particularly in the case of housing for agricultural labourers and fishermen. A scheme for re-building huts in the flood affected areas in the Pulinkunnu Pakuthy has been sanctioned as an experimental measure and after assessing its success there, it will be extended to other needy areas.

EDUCATION

10. In the field of education also, my Government are evincing keen interest. The College for Women, the C. M. S. College at Kottayam and the Scott Christian College, Nagercoil, have been raised to First Grade Colleges, and two new Colleges have been opened one at Pandalam and the other at Palai, while the number of seats in the Engineering College for the Degree Course has been raised from 50 to 100. My Government have decided that the Adult Education activities which are at present carried on by various organisations, should be brought under the direct supervision and control of a single authority and have accordingly appointed the Director of Public Instruction as the Adult Education Authority for the whole State. They have also constituted an Adult Education Board for implementation of the Adult Education Scheme. They have taken an important step towards the introduction of Basic Education by opening a Basic Training School at Cherpu and are collecting preliminary data for extending the scheme of compulsory primary education to Shencottah and Chittur Taluks. The sad lot of teachers in many private Secondary Schools

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly